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ABSTRACT

Articles in a military wives' magazine have indicated that officers' wives are questioning their roles. If the wives' attitudes are different from those of the past with respect to the role they believe the military expects of them, these changes must be recognized. A 45-statement questionnaire, with each statement reflecting a particular obligation, attitude, or action expected of an officer's wife, was completed by military wives with under 7 years (N=5), 7-15 years (N=18), and over 15 years (N=20) total experience. The small number of wives in the under seven years group precluded statistical comparison of this group with the other two groups. Nevertheless, there were indications that current officers' wives did not agree with or follow many of the old traditional military ideas. Regardless of the number of years of experience they had, wives gave "new military" responses to 16 of 34 items, responses which reflected that these officers' wives were more prone not to follow dress and courtesy traditions nor to feel obligated to participate in Officers' Wives Club activities or to be volunteers. The results suggest a need to examine military assignment policies that match family needs with service needs. (NRB)

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MILITARY OFFICERS' WIVES' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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Articles in issues of a military wives' magazine have indicated that officers' wives were questioning and were confused about their roles in much the same way that their contemporaries in civilian life are currently questioning the role society expects of them (Ladycom, 1974, 1975). There have also been related letters to a major overseas military newspaper (Stars and Stripes, 1976).

If in fact the attitudes of today's officers' wives are different, or are changing, from those of earlier times with respect to the role they believe the military expects of them, these changes need to be recognized. As these "new military" wives replace "old military" wives, their attitudes could have a significant impact on the future womanpower available for the operation of many military support services that traditionally use this volunteer resource pool. These include Red Cross, Thrift Shops, Army Community Service Centers, and Medical/Dental services to name only a few. The demand for different support services, such as child care, human relations programs, continuing education, etc., could also change. A changing attitude of these wives, coupled with the increasing percentage over the past years of military who are married, could have a strong influence on the morale, and the ability to maintain the necessary force levels, of the military. Complete reorientation of military personnel policies and procedures toward the "military family" rather than the "military sponsor" could be required. As of 1974, 83% of all military officers were married. This percentage had remained

about constant since 1953. However, during this same period of time, the percentage of enlisted personnel who were married increased from 33% to 53% (Goldman, 1976). The days of --"If the military wanted you to have a wife, they would have issued you one"-- are long gone.

Many of the traditional obligations or responsibilities of officers' wives have merely been reflections of the formal courtesies and practices of society. However, these seem to be more formally adherred to, and are usually retained longer, in the military community than in society as a whole. Beyond these obligations are another group of obligations which are unique to the special situation of the military.

During their early experiences with the military, officers' wives are usually briefed concerning their obligations through Officers' Wives Clubs (OWC) presentations and by their husbands. Also, this role expectation is informally reinforced by contacts with older, more experienced wives and by articles in military related periodicals.

Pamphlets such as "It's the Little Things" (1963) have been passed out by OWCs. These pamphlets give details of what to wear and how to act or react in various situations. The services and activities that are available to wives are also discussed. Most of these services and activities are provided through the volunteer efforts of other wives, thus implying that volunteer contributions of time are needed from all wives so that they will carry their share of the obligation of provided these services.

A wider coverage of the officer's wife's role in the military is provided by books which are written as guides for the military wife or as guides for officers.

It has been generally pointed out to an officer that when he becomes a commander, his wife acquires definite responsibilities

and opportunities. She needs to prepare herself for higher positions in his job (Crocker, 1975). The actions of a wife have been considered when the husband's efficiency report was written. Sometimes, it was the fault of the wife when the husband was passed over for promotion (Shea, 1954).

To sum up, the socialization of an officer's wife follows quite closely that of an ambassador's wife. The senior officers' wives acquaint the newcomer with the hazards of her role. She is informed of what her days as an officer's wife should be like. She is further told to uphold the military tradition and to be a complement to her husband. Military considerations should have priority over personal interests, friends, and nonmilitary loyalties (Stoddard and Cabanillas, 1976).

Studies of a more technical nature vary from those in which the findings relative to officers' wives were concidental to the primary study objective of officers' attitudes (Janowitz, 1966) through to detailed studies of unique aspects of the wife's situation (Stoddard and Cabanillas, 1976).

The officer's wife has had a well-defined and significant role outside the household, but it has traditionally been short of employment in the labor market. She was expected to take part in the welfare and recreational activities of the military community (Janowitz, 1966).

Marriage has always been considered vital, and divorce a liability, to an officer's career development (Goldman, 1976). In 1972, the Secretary of the Army explicitly pointed out that an officer should be rated negatively if his wife was a potential embarrassment to the military. However, if there was no wife or if his wife was a burden because of illness, he should not be considered negatively.

It was found that role conflict and role strain usually did not occur until the husband made a career commitment at about 4 or 5 years. Once this commitment was made, the strain and conflict went up, leveled off at about 8 years, and began to decline after about 14 years of service. As the husband moved closer to retirement, there appeared to be a sense of relief from having to "play the game" (Stoddard and Cabanillas, 1976).

It has been suggested that an agency be developed which would exert influence on the Department of Defense to discuss and debate the possible consequences of a given policy on the family (Stanton, 1976).

Study Procedure

Related studies and writings concerning officers' wives' roles and attitudes were researched and initial statements related to them were developed. These statements were used in a pilot study to categorize each statement as characteristics of "old military" or "new military" and to evaluate each statement as to the respondents' confidence in understanding what the statement said and their difficulty in determining agreement/disagreement with the statement. Final statements were then structured, biographical questions and open-ended questions added, and the questionnaire completed. Subject groups were selected, questionnaires administered, and the responses analysed.

Questionnaire Development

Based upon the review of related writings and studies, as well as personal experience, a series of statements were formulated. Each statement reflected a particular obligation, attitude, or action expected of an officer's wife. These statements covered items that were espoused during the period from the late 1950s to the

present time. These items were further refined by combining duplicate items, splitting out more complex ones, and rewording other items. The resulting intermediate list contained 67 items. A pilot study was then conducted. Respondents (N=8) indicated the following with respect to each item:

- Is the item characteristic of the attitude of an "old military" wife or a "new military" wife?

- How sure were they that they understood what the statement said?

- How easy was it to determine what their own attitude was concerning the statement?

- Any suggestions or comments?

Statements were again rewritten or deleted and new ones were added based on the results of the pilot study. Some statements were negated to give a balance between "old military" and "new military" attitude items. The 34 statements that resulted were then randomly ordered, and eight biographical questions plus three open-ended questions were added. Instructions, an answer sheet, and a cover letter were developed to complete the questionnaire.

Objective Group Selection

The selection of wives to complete the questionnaire was made to insure that the following criteria were met to the maximum extent possible.

1. Equal representation in each of the three length of experience groups (under 7, 7-15, and over 15 years).

2. Random selection.

To accomplish this sampling objective, the January, 1977, Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany telephone directory was used. First, all "non-officer" (all personnel not in the military in

grades of Lieutenant through General, pay grades 01-10) were eliminated as well as all female personnel and those with Bachelor Officers' Quarters (BOQ) addresses. The remaining officers listed were divided by rank into three groups; Lieutenant through Captain (01 to 03), Major (04), and Lieutenant Colonel and above (05 and up). This division included equivalent grades of all services and was based on the recent promotion trend to Major at about eight years service and to Lieutenant Colonel at about 15 years service.

Since ten useable completed questionnaires were desired in each group, it was determined that about 33 would be sent out in each group assuming a 30% return rate. This number was modified slightly as the packages were being developed. In planning the questionnaire package to be mailed out, consideration was given to the impact that each piece of the package would have on the respondents. This was done to insure better returns, both in the number returned and in the quality of the replies. Two return address labels were considered, individual ones as Stella Lybrand Norman and family ones as Ltc. and Mrs. William L. Norman. It was decided to use both labels and send out half of each group with one label and half with the other label. This resulted in an increase in the number in each group to 34 to make it even. The names were then selected randomly from the directory list for each group prepared earlier. Since only 36 names were available in the 01-03 group, all of them were sent packets. It was recognized that some of the wives might have been reared in military families and that this would put them in a group with a greater number of years of experience than the number of years that they had been married to an officer.

A total of 104 packages were sent out. Fourteen were mailed

through the German postal system to German addresses. Four, without current home addresses, were delivered to office addresses. The remaining 86 were hand delivered to post quarters' mail boxes. All were timed so that they would be received at about the same time and a desired return date was specified in the survey package.

Results

Forty-three completed questionnaires were returned. This represented a 42% overall return rate; however, the rate was extremely different between the under 7 years group (14%) and the other two groups (53%) and 60% respectively). By the specified return date, only two responses had been received from the under 7 years group. In an effort to increase responses, many wives in this group were informed of the situation and asked if they would complete and return the questionnaire if they had not already done so. Three more responses were received during the next six days. No relationship was noted between the returns and the address labels which were provided in the packages within any of the groups.

The questionnaires were tabulated and summaries of the biographical data and the questionnaire responses are shown on Tables 1 and 2. Responses to the three open-end questions will be discussed later.

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Insert TABLE 1 about here

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Insert TABLE 2 about here

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Method of Analysis

The tabulated data for 34 items (Statements 9-42 of the questionnaire) were subjected to several forms of analysis.

First, within each group and for all three groups collectively, responses were examined subjectively and by spot statistical calculations to determine if any correlation could be found based on biographical data other than the number of years experience.

Next, the groups were compared with each other, two groups at a time, to determine the degree of significance of differences in the responses to each question and to identify questions with similar response patterns among all groups. Significance of the different response patterns were checked using a 2x2 table, phi, and chi^2 for each question. Yates correction was applied where it was applicable.

Finally, within each group all "agree" responses to "new military" statements and "disagree" responses to "old military" statements were totaled to give a single figure which represented the number of "new military" statements and "agree" responses for "old military" items to give a sum of "old military" responses. Correlation of this data was also checked using chi^2.

Discussion

The study results were somewhat weakened from the start due to the low return ratio of wives in the under 7 years group. This precluded statistical comparison of this group with the other two groups due to the low numbers. It had been recognized during preparation of the questionnaire that some of the wives in this group may have come from military families and, therefore, have total experience exceeding their apparent under 7 years. A check of wives' ages and children's ages on responses in the over 15 years group was made. By elimination of those with children over five years old, a maximum of three (all

with no children) in the over 15 years group could have been wives of less than 7 years, but with over 15 years military experience as military children. Even if these three wives had been counted as under 7 years' returns, this would still produce a return ratio that was considerable lower for this group. It was considered improbable that any of this group could have been among the 7-15 years group since to have less than 15 years combined experience as a dependent and as a wife combined would have required becoming a dependent at age 13 or older as none were under 28 years old.

It could be inferred that such a low return rate indicated either a complete disinterest or feeling of noninvolvement by this group or that they have deliberately disassociated themselves from all unique aspects of the officer's wife's role.

Even with serious restrictions on the use of statistical analysis to determine the significance of similarity or differences in responses among the groups, the responses indicated several patterns.

First, items could be divided into two categories. Part of the items applied basically to social courtesies and obligations that are common to both officers' wives and their contemporaries in civilian life even though the degree of obligation may vary. The remaining items were uniquely military. Other patterns that were identifiable included stronger agreement or disagreement uniformly in all three groups to some items. Also, the responses to certain items showed generally mixed feelings within and among all groups.

The comparisons of the under 7 years group with the other groups by item using statistics resulted in either too low a number to compute using chi^2 or when computed came out as not significant with

answers in the order of .10 to .30. This also occurred with many of the items when comparing the 7-15 years group versus the over 15 years group. Six items were found to be significant between the latter two groups beyond .10 with two of them significant beyond .05. Results are shown on Table 3.

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Insert TABLE 3 about here

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Eleven items (9, 10, 14, 19, 22, 31, 32, 35, 37, 38, and 42 on TABLE 2) showed strong agreement (78%) by all three groups. All of these were "new military" items. Seven dealt with uniquely military aspects, while four were common to society as a whole. These indicated that all of today's officers' wives do not accept many of the traditional expectations of them. Wives in all groups agreed:

-That they should be free to pursue any vocation (9) and are not merely dependents in a complementary role (31).

-That neither the military nor local commanders should have the right to require wives to perform "volunteer" services (14) or to require military families to live on post (32).

-That obligations should not, or no longer do, exist to join (35) and participate in Officers' Wives' Club(42), to wear hats and gloves(37), to give promotion parties (22), to have calling cards (38), or to keep senior officers' wives informed (19).

-That their husbands should assist with housework and childcare(10).

Five items (28, 33, 34, 36, and 39) showed strong disagreement (78%) in all groups. These were all "old military" items with all but one being uniquely military associated. These reflected attitudes that they were no longer, or should not be, obligated to: make formal

New Year's calls on commanders (33), follow established routines of volunteer work (36), wear nylons to be properly dressed (28), or stand when senior officers' wives enter a room (39). They further believe their conduct should not be addressed in their husband's efficiency reports or affect his career (34).

Statistical differences beyond .10 were found between responses of the 7-15 years group and the over 15 years group for items 20, 21, 25, 27, 29, and 41 with items 27 and 29 being significant beyond .05. All but items 27 and 41 were "old military" statements. The wives in the over 15 years showed more agreement than those with 7-15 years experience that a post commander has the responsibility of making and enforcing clothing regulations for wives (25). More wives in the over 15 years group felt that they should dress with their husband's position in mind (29) and should not wear jeans while shopping (41). The wives in the over 15 years group also felt that the presence of those arriving or leaving was required at Hail and Farewell parties (21), and that the husbands were responsible for their wives' actions (20). The 7-15 years group agreed more that official invitations must be accepted (27).

The responses for the above six items for the under 7 years group supported the changing attitude hypothesis in that they were either in line with the 7-15 years group or even more opposite of the pattern of responses of the over 15 years group. This same pattern of increasing percent of disagreeing responses for "old military" items, as years of experience decreased was observed in several of the twelve remaining undiscussed items. Although not statistically supportable, items 11, 12, 15, 18, 23, 26 and 30 showed this pattern indicating a changing attitude or difference in attitude with respect to years of experience. Areas covered by these items,

and attitude trends that were reflected, were that wives with fewer years of experience show more agreement:

-That wives should be educated and influential in public activities (11).

-That tours should be more stabilized (12).

-That a wife need not approach military social life with anticipation (15), nor is she obligated to learn about the standards, requirements, codes, and opportunities of the military (18).

-That officers' wives may complain about the military to civilians (23).

-That records of calls are not required (26).

-That a wife has a right to complain about undesirable orders rather than accept them without complaining (30).

The remaining five items (13, 16, 17, 24, and 40) showed no pattern, unless something can be inferred from mixed responses. Three of these related to the wife's attitude concerning loyalty to, taking second place to, and influencing her husband's career. The other two dealt with leaving social functions before the senior guest and with feelings about the military post environment.

Other factors were noted during analysis. Item 11 actually expressed two separate ideas - "educated" and "influential" wives. This probably complicated responses. Items 11, 12, 15, and 21 all had a high percentage of undecided responses.

As an additional check for differences between the groups, all "new military" responses (agree with "new" items and disagree with "old" items) were totaled for each group. The same was done for "old military" responses. These were checked using chi^2 and the

results are shown in TABLE 4. Only the difference between the 7-15 years group and the over 15 years group was determined to be significant; however, this was significant beyond .0005.

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Insert TABLE 4 about here

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Open-end Questions

Three open-end questions were included to determine if wives would or would not again choose a military career for their husbands and their reasons for so choosing, to identify alternate careers, and to solicit comments and suggestions on the questionnaire coverage that might identify areas for future study.

No statistical significant differences between groups existed (TABLE 4) with respect to responses on again choosing a military career. However, there were a large number that did not answer yes or no. The 7-15 years and over 15 years groups answered predominately yes, while the under 7 years group included more no's. In the cases of no response, most indicated that they did not choose to respond since it was their husband's decision and that they would support whichever way he chose. Of those who answered "yes", the predominate reasons given were opportunities for travel and meeting people, better off financially, it is what the husband chose and enjoys, medical and leave benefits, and wife enjoyed it "despite disadvantages."

For those answering "no", predominate objections were to separations, too frequent moves, and steady loss of benefits.

In the comments of those responding, whether it was a "yes", "no", or "undecided" for again choosing a military career, several

points were repeated. These emphasized the wives' enjoyment of travel, leave benefits, and meeting people. There also were numerous and strong feelings expressed about decreasing security and the serious loss of benefits. Statements with respect to recent Congressional actions were particularly strong; and among the "yes" responses implied that such continued action would change their response.

The responses identifying alternate career choices were varied with no career mentioned more than twice. Most of the alternate career choices related to the husband's current military speciality such as "computers" or were in related fields such as foreign service, outdoor profession, FBI, policeman, etc.

Other areas of the role of an officer's wife suggested by the respondents for future consideration were: the working wife, the wife's obligation to volunteer if she uses services, the mother/children aspects, loyalty to husband whether officer or not, the responsibilities toward other wives in the community, the spiritual aspects and conflicts, the need for nighttime OWC activities, the changes wives would make if they could, the role in civilian communities, roles during separations, and orientation of new officers' wives.

An interesting observation was that seven of the respondents agreed that a wife should be a significant influence on her husband's career, yet disagreed with a wife's conduct influencing his career and being mentioned in his efficiency report. Two more of the respondents also split on these two items in the opposite direction of the seven above. This might suggest that they see themselves as moral support but not a social support or part of his career.

Conclusions

Although conclusive results would require a much longer survey with considerably more respondents, there were sufficient indications from this study that today's officers' wives do not agree with or follow many of the old traditional ideas of the military. There is also evidence of differences between wives' attitudes with respect to the number of years service experience they have. Whether the latter is a primarily a function of years of experience in the military or a difference based on age, background, generation, etc. could not be determined.

Regardless of the number of years of experience, the officers' wives answered "new military" responses to 16 of the 34 items while there was no similar unanimity of "old military" responses to any question. These "new military" attitudes reflected that today's officers' wives are more prone not to follow dress and courtesy traditions nor do they feel obligated to join or participate in OWC activities or to "volunteer."

Today's wives do not accept military influence on their manners, dress, or conduct. They do not feel that their actions should influence their husband's career. They agree that wives should be able to have their own career and have their husband's help with home operation.

The wives with fewer number of years experience are more inclined to feel that they should be educated and influential in public activities, should have more stable assignments, can take or leave military opportunities for activities and service, and have a right to state their feelings and be considered.

Wives with 7-15 years and those with over 15 years experience are inclined to again select a military career for their husbands

contrary to those with under 7 years who would not. Travel and meeting people are the greatest attractions to all groups. The loss or the lack of benefits and security were the major concerns of those wives who indicated that they would not again choose the military. These were also of concern to those choosing the military.

These attitude changes will have an impact on future military services and personnel actions. As more wives want careers and more stability, fewer "volunteers" will be available to supply the services and the demands for educational and childcare services will increase. The military's ability to react to these requirements will influence "family" decisions for or against a military career and also the time at which "families" retire. If the military can change its personnel policy with respect to moves and assignment locations in order to meet the total needs of the family and can eliminate the feeling that security and benefits are decreasing, then the motivation for new and longer careers will be enhanced. Associated with this motivation will be a reduction in retirement, recruiting, and training costs.

More studies are needed to identify the primary negative "family" aspects of military life and to determine ways of eliminating them through changes in policies. Areas that need particular attention are the availability of educational and career opportunities for wives, as well as, childcare facilities. The orientation of new officers' wives should be studied to determine ways which better meet their needs and at the same time gain their support for the needs of the military. Alternative ways of meeting "short tour" requirements which will eliminate or reduce separations should be studied.

Lastly, considerable potential seems to exist for increased retention, and thereby to affect savings in costs, by a change in the concept of assignment policies. The changing attitude of wives, increasing husband/wife teams, and increasing female military sponsors point to the need for an assignment policy that matches "family profiles" of qualifications and needs against "duty station profiles" to insure both initial and continued career motivation. Studies are needed to develop this concept and to determine how it could be implemented.

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Footnote

[1]Written by Stella Lybrand Norman based upon initial research and questionnaire development which was completed during the Spring of 1976 and a survey conducted February-March 1977 at Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, while attending Boston University. Dr. James F. Baker, Adjunct Professor of Education, Dr. Wade K. Baird, Adjunct Associate Professor of Education, and Dr. Paul H. McIntire, Professor of Psychology and Guidance, of the faculty of Boston University provided advice and assistance. Copies of the questionnaire and more details of the results may be obtained from Stella Lybrand Norman, 10194 Bessmer Lane, Fairfax, Virginia 22032

TABLE 1

Respondent Characteristics

	Under 7 (n = 5)	7-15 (n = 18)	Over 15 (n = 20)
1. Number of children			
Range	0-1	0-4	0-5
Median	0.4	2.2	2.2
Mode	.0	2.0	2.0
2. Children's ages-years			
Range	5	1 mo.-14	4-25
Median	5	7.1	13.1
Mode	5	5.0	14.5
3. Educational level-percent			
Not high school graduate	20%	-%	-%
High school graduate	-	11	5
Some college	60	39	35
College graduate	-	33	35
Graduate level study	20	17	25
4. Age-percent			
Under 28 years	60%	-%	5%
28-38 years	40	94	45
Over 38	-	6	50

TABLE 1 (continued)

5. Geographical background-percent			
New England	20%	11%	5%
East Coast	60	44	20
Southeast	-	11	20
Southwest	-	-	5
Midwest	20	28	5
Far West	-	6	25
Other (Europe or mixed U.S.)	-	-	20
6. Source of husband's commission-percent			
Academy	-%	11%	10%
ROTC	60	39	50
Officer candidate school	40	39	40
Other	-	11	-
7. Service-percent			
Army	80%	22%	40%
Navy	-	22	30
Air Force	20	56	30
Marine	-	-	-

TABLE 2

Responses (D-disagree; A-agree)

Qn #	Old or New Military*	Under 7		7-15		Over 15		Totals	
		D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A
9	N	0	5	0	18	1	19	1	42
10	N	0	5	1	15	1	15	2	35
11	N	0	4	4	7	5	12	9	23
12	N	2	2	3	11	2	13	7	26
13	O	1	4	7	8	5	13	13	25
14	N	1	4	1	17	3	16	5	37
15	O	1	1	5	8	3	11	9	20
16	O	4	0	7	9	9	9	20	18
17	O	3	2	12	0	12	6	27	8
18	O	2	3	6	11	4	13	12	27
19	N	1	3	3	15	1	18	5	36
20	O	3	2	9	6	4	14	16	22
21	O	3	1	8	4	4	12	15	17
22	N	0	5	3	14	2	15	5	34
23	O	4	1	12	2	12	6	28	9
24	O	1	4	9	6	5	13	15	23
25	O	4	1	16	1	11	6	31	8
26	O	3	1	13	3	10	8	26	12
27	N	2	2	3	15	10	8	15	25
28	O	5	0	17	0	20	0	42	0
29	O	2	2	16	2	9	9	27	13
30	O	4	0	15	2	12	7	31	9
31	N	1	4	0	18	2	17	3	39

TABLE 2 (continued)

		D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A
32	N	1	4	1	15	4	14	6	33
33	O	4	1	16	1	18	1	38	3
34	O	5	0	16	1	18	2	39	3
35	N	0	5	1	17	1	18	2	40
36	O	4	1	16	2	19	0	39	3
37	N	0	5	0	18	1	19	1	42
38	N	0	5	3	15	1	18	4	38
39	O	3	1	14	4	15	3	32	8
40	N	2	3	4	14	6	11	12	28
41	N	0	4	1	15	7	13	8	32
42	N	1	4	1	16	2	18	4	38

*denotes if statement is "old" or "new" military attitude

	Would choose military again for husband							
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
43	1	2	12	2	11	4	24	8

TABLE 3

Statistical Analysis

Significance of Differences

Item #	7-15 years group vs over 15 years group		
	ϕ	chi^2	Significance
20	.323	3.43	.07
21	.344	3.30	.08
25	.290	2.87	.10
27	.347	4.34	.04**
29	.362	4.72	.03**
41	.276	2.74	.10

** only two significant beyond .05

TABLE 4

Statistical Analysis

Total Old Military vs New Military Responses

Under 7 years		7-15 years		Over 15 years	
Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
35	120	102	452	180	433

Significances of differences in total old and new Responses

	ϕ	chi^2	Significance
Under 7 vs 7-15 years	.043	1.35	n.s.
Under 7 vs over 15 years	.051	2.01	n.s.
7-15 years vs over 15 years	.127	19.05	.0005

SAMPLE CALCULATIONS FOR SIGNIFICANCE

Let:
7-15 years Disagree = a = 16
7-15 years Agree = c = 2
Over 15 Disagree = b = 9
Over 15 Agree = d = 9
Total = a+b+c+d = N = 36

Then:

General 2X2 table

	7-15	Over 15	
Disagree	a	b	p
Agree	c	d	q
	p'	q'	N

	7-15	Over 15	
Disagree	16	9	25
Agree	2	9	11
	18	18	36

Before computing phi it is necessary to calculate the "expected frequencies" for each of the four cells to determine if the Yates correction should be in the phi calculations.

Let: r = a row in the 2X2 table
k = a column in the 2X2 table

Then: the "expected frequency" f_e for a cell is;

$$f_e = \frac{(f_r)\ (f_k)}{N}$$ General formula

If the f_e in all four cells are ten or more use equation without Yates correction:

$$\text{phi} = \phi = \frac{ad-bc}{\sqrt{(a-b)(c-d)(a-c)(b-d)}}$$

If the f_e in any of the four cells are less than ten but not less than two, apply the Yates correction:

$$\text{phi} = \phi = \frac{|ad-bc| - \frac{N}{2}}{\sqrt{(a-b)(c-d)(a-c)(b-d)}}$$

If any cell has an f_e less than two, use neither equation.

$$\text{chi}^2 = x^2 = N\phi^2$$

To find significance or probability, look at chi^2 table at one degree of freedom and x^2.